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KENTO MOMOTA

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INDIA WOMEN BRING SOME SMILES IN TOKYO GLOOM

Shuttler PV Sindhu, archer Deepika Kumar and boxer Pooja Rani into next round as India endured another mixed day

CHEERS... AND JEERS AS MORE INDIANS EXIT

Sindhu outwitted Hong Kong's NY Cheung 21-9 21-16 to top her group and make the last-16. Debutant boxer Pooja out-punched Algeria's Ichrak Chaib 5-0 to progress into the last-eight. Deepika stayed afloat to make the last-16 but archers — Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav — suffered loss. Even B Sai Praneeth exited after losing to Mark Caljouw of the Netherlands

MOMOTA SHOCKED, BILES PULLS OUT AGAIN

Japan's No 1 shuttler Kento Momota shocked by Heo Kwang Hee in last Group match, exits Olympics

Gymnast Simone Biles pulled out of a second event to protect her mental health

India's women's hockey team lost 1-4 to Great Britain, quarterfinal prospects dented

12th

ARJUN, ARVIND PRODUCED BEST EVER OLYMPIC PERFORMANCE | P11, 12

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge (fourth from left), chairs a meeting with representatives of 14 Opposition parties' at his chamber in Parliament on Wednesday. Congress MP Rahul Gandhi also attended the meeting | PTI

Snoopgate strengthens Opposition unity index

RICHA SHARMA @ New Delhi

AMID West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee chanting the coalition mantra during her ongoing visit to Delhi, the index of Opposition unity in Parliament is getting stronger with daily joint strategy meetings and back channel talks to corner the Centre over the Pegasus snoopgate.

Given the scale of its footprint, it's Pegasus that has catalysed unity within the Opposition, with leaders across the spectrum resolving to fight together against the government in Parliament. They are not stalling debate; instead they are pressing for a discussion on the matter in the presence of the prime minister or the home minister. They also want a judicial probe by a Supreme Court-monitored committee.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who generally skips Opposition meetings, has been present at joint strategy sessions in Parliament this time around. Also, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has otherwise not been part of the strategy meetings, is on the same Opposition page on Pegasus.

Another element of the strategy is all like-minded parties giving adjournment motions on the issue in both Houses. The floor leaders of the Opposition parties have been meeting almost every day to synchronise their approach.

On Wednesday, floor leaders of 14 Opposition parties met in the office of Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge in Parliament. "Sitting with the entire opposition is extremely humbling. Amazing experience, wisdom and insight in everyone present," Rahul tweeted after the meeting.

The 14 parties are the Congress, DMK, Samajwadi Party, CPM, CPI, National Conference, Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena, Rashtriya Janata Dal, AAP, IUML, RSP, KCM and VCK. The Trinamool Congress had to skip it because it happened at the same time Mamata had scheduled her meeting with party MPs.

Mamata had a busy second day in the Capital, meeting Congress president Sonia Gandhi and AAP founder Arvind Kejriwal to drum up support for Opposition unity. For the record, she told reporters, "I don't want to be the face of the Opposition... not everyone has to be... I am a simple worker, want to continue as a worker. we all need to work together." Who would eventually lead the coalition would depend on the situation, she added.

"Regional parties will lead the nation, we will not bow down before anyone anymore... the time has come," she said.

Mamata ambiguous

Choosing to be cagey about being the face of a united Opposition, Mamata told reporters: "You are asking me the name of the child even before it is born." Modi government can be defeated. "If Bengal could do it, so can the other states."

No deputies, Bommai takes charge alone

New Chief Minister says word on cabinet expansion will come from the party's central leadership

CM TO VISIT FLOOD-HIT AREAS IN UTTARA KANNADA TODAY

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai will be visiting flood-hit areas in Uttara Kannada district on Thursday. Speaking to reporters after holding his first Cabinet meeting, after taking oath as the Chief Minister of Karnataka on Wednesday, Bommai said that the State Government will come to the aid of people affected by floods and the Covid-19 pandemic.

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

BEFORE he stepped on to the dais at Raj Bhavan to take oath as Chief Minister of Karnataka, Basavaraj Bommai touched BS Yediyurappa's feet seeking blessings, signifying the important role the former CM played in getting him anointed as chief minister.

Bommai, the 23rd person to hold the post, was sworn in as chief minister by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Wednesday, amid slogans hailing Yediyurappa and him. The 61-year-old Bommai took oath in the name of God, even as Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Kishan Reddy, who were sent as observers by the BJP's central leadership, looked pleased.

Much like his mentor Yediyurappa in 2019, Bommai took oath alone, with no deputies or ministers taking charge with him. On Wednesday morning, he visited a temple and headed straight to Yediyurappa's residence before arriving at the Raj Bhavan for the swearing-in.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai at his oath-taking ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Bengaluru on Wednesday. Former CM BS Yediyurappa is also seen | VINOD KUMAR T

Acknowledging that he would take Yediyurappa's guidance for administration, Bommai categorically denied that he would be a 'rubberstamp CM'. "I will, however, ensure that I get the people's stamp of approval for my government's administration and programmes," he said with a smile when asked if he will continue to remain in the shadow of Yediyurappa.

"I will head to New Delhi to meet party senior leaders in the next couple of days and thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and party president JP Nadda. Discussions on cabinet expansion will be held after that. Senior central leaders will take a decision after deliberation," Bommai told reporters after the swearing-in. No formula or names have been decided for the posts of deputy chief ministers or ministers, he said.

In his first cabinet meeting with no council of ministers, Bommai announced a scholarship scheme exclusively for children of farmers. P4

BJP BLOCKS PARL PANEL MEET ON PEGASUS ROW

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

THE ongoing stand-off in Parliament cast its shadow on the Standing Committee on Information and Technology on Wednesday, with BJP MPs executing a well-scripted strategy to deny any opportunity to the Shashi Tharoor-led panel to take up discussion on the raging Pegasus issue. They also shielded absentee officials from being hauled up for contempt by ensuring the meeting could not be convened because of lack of quorum.

While the meeting's details are stated to be confidential, two panel members, BJP's Nishikant Dubey and Trinamool's Mahua Maitra, fought it out on Twitter over verbal abuse. Dubey accused Moitra of abusing him at the venue of the meeting. "By hurling the Bihari *gunda* (goon) abuse, Mahua Moitra has abused the people from North India and the Hindi speaking belt," tweeted Dubey. Moitra wondered what the fuss about was all about, when the meeting didn't take place due to lack of quorum.

According to Parliament staffers, perhaps for the first time in the history of Standing Committee meetings, none of the summoned officials from the ministries of home and electronics and information technology turned up for the meeting. If an official is busy, he/she is represented by the next in hierarchy.

CONTINUED ON: P9

Bengaluru may see new top cop, Pant likely to be moved

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE Bengaluru City Police is likely to be overhauled next month. With the incumbent Police Commissioner and Director General of Police (DGP) Kamal Pant completing his one-year tenure on August 1, there are chances of him passing on the baton of the city top cop, said informed sources.

The post of the Bengaluru police commissioner is of ADGP rank and Pant is the second DGP-rank officer to head the city police after retired DG&IGP Ajay Singh, who was the city police commissioner in 2005 after his elevation to the DGP post. Pant, an IPS officer of 1990 batch of the Indian Police Service (IPS), was promoted as DGP in April this year following the superannuation of then DGP, Training, PK Garg on April 30.

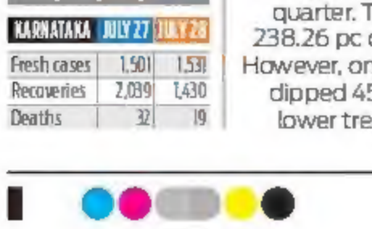
Names of Additional Directors General of Police (ADGP), Law & Order, Pratap Reddy, B Dayanand (Intelligence) and Amrit Paul (Training) are in contention for the city commissioner's post.

CONTINUED ON: P5

Democracy is work in progress, says US in soft line on rights

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

IN what appears to be a softening of the US' stand on human rights issues in India, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday said every democracy is a work in progress. "Both our democracies are works in progress... sometimes that process is painful. Sometimes it's ugly. But, the strength of democracy is to embrace it. One of the elements Americans admire the most is fundamental freedom and human rights. That's how we define India. India's democracy is powered by free-thinking citizens," Blinken said after his meeting with External Affairs Minister.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi on Wednesday

In his response, Jaishankar said the quest for a perfect democracy applies to the US as much as it does to India. "There is a moral obligation to right historical wrongs and our policies fall in that category. Don't equate freedoms with non-governance or lack of governance," he added.

CONTINUED ON: P9

NATIONWIDE	JULY 27	JULY 28
Fresh cases	26,689	43,654
Recoveries	42,363	41,678
Deaths	415	640

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
July 27 **36,87,239 doses**
July 28 **39,42,457 doses**
TOTAL DOSES: **45,02,55,460**

KARNATAKA	JULY 27	JULY 28
Fresh cases	1,501	1,531
Recoveries	2,039	1,430
Deaths	32	19

₹106.08 cr
KARNATAKA BANK Q1 NET PROFIT

The lender posted a net profit of ₹106.08 crore for Q1 of FY 2022, as against ₹31.36 crore logged during the sequential previous quarter. The net has grown 238.26 pc over Q4 of 2020-21. However, on Y-o-Y basis, the net dipped 45.98 pc, mainly on lower treasury income. P13

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